

Jan 1st. Tuesday afternoon -

My dear Gray -

In brother Sam's package I found the parcel of your duplicate grasses, for which I am greatly obliged - Some of them I had already "told" when assorting your grasses 5 yrs. ago - others were new to me. However, I do not hoard, like our friend Barratt, but give all away, like yourself, after reserving a full geographical suite - And now one or 2 remarks, by way of payment for your contribution -

Amongst the specimens you got from Herb. Hooker is a Calamagrostis from the Rocky Mts. of which I took one, as in duty bound - It is labelled, by Torrey, "C. Canadensis, awn inserted lower than usual" - In my own herb. I merely wrote - not C. canad. Amongst the plants of Mr. Storer from N. Labrador, recently received from you, is another piece of this same plant - & now, in your last invoice, comes C. Halleriana DC. from Lagerheim & Sjögren (beautiful names these Swedish Botany-Frenchmen have!) which after careful dissection I pronounce to be the same thing. They have written on their printed label - C. phragmitoides, meaning, of course, C. pseudophragmites, Reichenb. a syn. which I observe Kth. gives under C. Halleriana DC. which it seems is the Arundo pseudo-phragmites Schrad. Here is a new species, for our books, unless you, or some other wise man, have made the discovery before me -

The alpine Agrostidae, from Agassiz, (on the labels of which you did not rely) were mixed, in both cases - A. alpina has very hairy branches to the panicle, the ~~lower~~ lower palea with 2 sharp distinct cusps, & the awn at the

very base. *A. rupestris* has nearly smooth branches to the panicle - cusps wanting on the lower palea, & the awn inserted a very little below the middle - Altho' the specimens you sent me were mixed, yet I suspect they were rightly intended - as the *A. rupestris* only contained 2 panicles of *A. alp.* & that species only one root of *A. rep.* I mention this to you, as it is probable yours are also mingled - tho' the species are very distinct, & I now know them without the microscope - *A. alp.* has a very small, but distinct upper palea, but I do not detect any rudiment of it in *A. rupestris*. which is a good *Trichodium gracile* loc.

I have, from Mr. Curtis what he calls "*Poa autumnalis*, Ell.!" which is just your *P. sylvatica* except that it is 4-fls. I think it may be *P. campylos* - see a specimen in your herb, without locality.

This is all I have to communicate, at the moment, as a "man of grass," & if you do not profit by it why the fault is none of mine.

Lam. has given me a good many scraps of the Texan things, which, with sundry specimens from your garden will help me to a knowledge of many of them. I am longing for a sight of your paper - ought not the first sheet to have reached me ere this? You will be sorry to hear that the worm is in the kind heimerhundy (at least in Sam's) & the specimens are also mouldy in many cases - However, he is going over them with alcohol & cor. subl.

It is a long while since I saw our friend Torrey - He has been very busy of late examining the Med. Students, I understand - The family all leave town this week, or early in the next, I believe - They are now spread about

the city, having given up their lodgings - My John comes to town, for good, next week, being now clear of his engagement with the Iron Company - He is to be married some day in the 2nd week of April (from the 9th to the 13th) This is, absolutely, all my news & I should not have troubled you with a letter were it not that I wished to thank you for the parcel of grasses, & to say my little say concerning them -

If you feel as I do, you are heartily disgusted at the conduct of the politicians - of both parties - on the Slavery question - The Northern whigs are backing out as fast as they can, from the Free-soil principle, because, they do not care to weaken the administration, or divide their party - whilst the Democrats are taking open ground with the South, tho' a large number of them belonged, only a year ago, to the Free-soil Party! The South, with their threats of disunion, have fairly frightened & shullied the weak & wavering; & are bribing (in some shape or another) the politicians proper - Even California is not to be admitted, unless more Slave States are made out of what they chose to call Texas; thus swallowing up a principal part of N. Mex? They say (the Southern men) that Califa is far too large for admission, as a State, whilst Texas, as already admitted, ~~is~~ runs from Houston to Sun-set! I believe there are not 20 men in Congress, who care whether human beings are bought & sold as chattels, except in so far as they are interested politically, in the management of the agitation - My soul is sick - even to loathing - of the base, cold-hearted trucking of these politicians - As to the South,

they dare not - cannot - carry out their threats - if the
Northern men want only be true to the views & feelings of
their Constituents & show a united front - using
their majority in Congress to deal righteously by the
appressed Africans - But I feel there is no chance of it.
& Southern re-action has already commenced, & will
make head rapidly, I fear - on the plea of saving the Union
but, in fact, to save political parties & influences.
Excuse this much of politics, with which I am not apt

RECEIVED
JAN 13 1851

Prof. A. Gray

Lambridge

Massachusetts.

to trouble you, but I feel some excitement on this one
question, & the more since I see how party influences are
to weigh down good morals, & perpetuate human bondage.
My best love to dear Mrs. G. of whose improvement I
shall hear with very much pleasure when she has
time & inclination to write to you. Very affly
The newspapers will have informed
you of the public meetings here to
"cancel with the velvet proviso" at their banners, say.
H. C.